

CONGO IN A NEW ERA OF GLOBAL COMPETITION 2025



RETURN TO DC

POLITICS, POWER, POSITION



CDIS CO-FOUNDERS



LAURA KUPE
JIM NGKOWEY
LUKOGHO KASOMO

Left to Right

The CDIS co-founders joined forces to build a platform to connect individuals of Congolese descent, and those who are interested in the DRC, to network and create relationships and initiatives that drive an impact in the DRC and its Diaspora, across the following categories: education, business, careers, healthcare and philanthropy.

CDIS was founded by Congolese-American millennials with extensive experience in international business, development, foreign policy, national security and government.

6

Years of impact and thought leadership

+1K

Attendees, virtual and in-person

+40K

Media impressions



ABOUT CDIS

VISION

Congolese Diaspora Impact Summit, CDIS, was founded in 2018 to facilitate networking within the Congolese Diaspora in America, amplify the voices of Congolese experts and support initiatives that enhance the socioeconomic capital of the DRC and its Diaspora.

MISSION

- Increase the social, economic and political capital of Congolese-Americans
- Amplify the voices of experts of Congolese descent
- Increase access to business and investment opportunities in the DRC and in America
- Improve the environment to drive brain gain and development

THE MODERATORS

Laura Kupe is a multilingual attorney with over 10 years of national security and foreign policy experience across the Department of Defense, U.S. House of Representatives, Department of Homeland Security, and White House. Most recently, she served as Senior Advisor to the Deputy Secretary of Defense, providing strategic counsel on homeland defense and presidential transition. Recognized as a next-generation leader by The Root and Munich Security Conference, she graduated from the University of Michigan and the University of Michigan Law School.

Kafuti Talahumbu is the Associate Director of Corporate Partnerships at The George Washington University, managing collaborations across 10 schools and 81 institutes. Previously, he served as Channel Partner Manager at Verizon and led strategic initiatives at IBM, including Watson Education's Partner Ecosystem. His experience includes financial analysis at The Investment Company Institute, providing insights to the Federal Reserve and Treasury. a bachelor's degree in Economics and Public Policy from Saint Mary's College of Maryland and an MBA from GW's School of Business.

Lukogho Kasomo has extensive experience in domestic and international policy, as well as business development. She recently served as a Business Development Manager for a Fortune 500 financial services company and previously worked as Legislative Staffer for former U.S. Representative José E. Serrano. Her career includes business development roles in Nairobi and Accra, government relations at Raytheon Technologies, and work with the U.S. Global Leadership Coalition. She holds an MBA from Howard University and a B.A. from San José State University.



Laura Kupe

Co-founder, CDIS



**Kafuti
Talahumbu**

Associate Director of Corporate
Partnerships, George
Washington University



**Lukogho
Kasomo**

Co-founder, CDIS

NETWORKING DINNER

TAKEAWAYS FROM THE CONVERSATION WITH MVEMBA PHEZO DIZOLELE ON CONGO IN A NEW ERA OF GLOBAL COMPETITION

CDIS Co-founder Laura Kupe spoke with Mvemba Dizolele to discuss the Congolese diaspora's impact on Congo and its shifting geopolitics. Mvemba is a Congolese-American scholar, journalist, and foreign policy analyst whose decades-long career spans from serving in the U.S. military to leading Africa and international affairs programs for major organizations.

Below are some points that stood out from the fireside chat.

The Diaspora's Role

- The Diaspora **will not solve** Congo's problems; they will be solved by the Congolese people living in the DRC. The Diaspora can be an ally and support problem solvers on the ground.
- The Diaspora needs to find ways to engage the Congolese government, alongside civil society, advocates, and activists operating in the DRC.

US Government Engagement

- More Congolese-Americans should consider engaging the U.S. government to advocate for change in Congo, and broaden the conversation about U.S.-DRC relations beyond conflict and security.
- The community's visibility is essential for the U.S. to take the DRC seriously.

Resources, Economy & Accountability

- Congo's undeniable mineral wealth could be a source of stability, but only if there is a concerted effort to hold armed groups accountable for three decades of instability.

Governance & Institutional Reform

- With increased U.S. interest in Congo's critical minerals, the country requires strong governance and clear policies to ensure foreign investment supports lasting development and economic progress.
-



**MVEMBA
DIZOLELE**

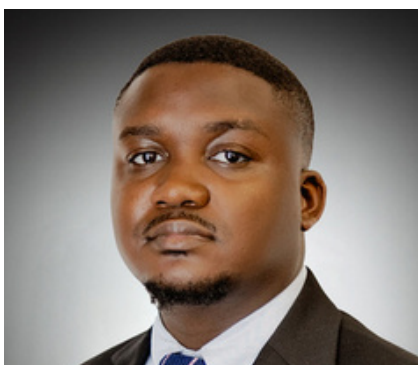
Lecturer in African Studies,
Johns Hopkins SAIS

MARKETS REIMAGINED: PRIVATE SECTOR VISIONS FOR SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

This panel explored ways the DRC can diversify its economic development through agriculture, creative industries, and renewable energy while addressing key challenges: de-risking investments, establishing transparent value chains, and creating sustainable development models that benefit local communities.

Panel Summary:

- The Diaspora must be proactive now, as there is increased interest and financial flows into Congo. This type of engagement, however, must be decisive, as other people are not going to offer and give opportunities; the Diaspora has to be accountable to itself and look for and find those opportunities to engage, as no one will
- There needs to be transparency across the legal and tax frameworks to make investment in the DRC easier and more appealing.
- DRC is relying heavily on peace and mineral deals to spur its growth and open new markets. Time will tell whether Congo and the U.S. can carry out the deal.
- Diaspora must lead with urgency and accountability. The Congolese diaspora cannot afford to wait for opportunities to be offered. Diaspora professionals and entrepreneurs should proactively identify, pursue, and create pathways that bridge international financial institutions with local investment opportunities on the ground. This diaspora has global networks and strategic expertise and can act as an essential connector, ensuring that foreign capital flows benefit Congolese citizens rather than extractive outside interests alone.



**STEPHANE
BOSSIO,
PE**

Vice President, Ridge Line
Elements



**MANDA
BWEREVU**

CEO, Kuleta



**RICHARD
MBOKANI**

Founder, Bisika Mbokani Law

KEY TAKEAWAYS

FROM GRASSROOTS TO THE INTERNET: TRADITIONAL AND DIGITAL APPROACHES TO CONGO ADVOCACY

This panel explored the evolution of Congolese diaspora advocacy from the 1990s to the present, examining the transformation of grassroots movements across three decades. Panelists discussed how generational approaches complement one another, the impact of digital platforms on policy-making, and how contemporary activists can build on past work to pioneer new engagement methods.

Panel Summary:

- Early activism relied on local community gatherings and physical media, whereas today's landscape leverages social media platforms like TikTok and Instagram to amplify Congolese voices globally in real time.
- Each generation in the diaspora has faced its own organizing challenges. Older generations dealt with the aftermath of colonization and Mobutu's 32-year rule. Millennials and Gen Z now face challenges, including apathy, misinformation, and information overload.
- Panelists stressed the importance of fact-based advocacy, urging the diaspora to combine powerful narratives with factual data to effectively influence policy changes in the U.S. and the DRC. They also stressed that today's Congo-focused advocates and allies must be visible and consistent so that Congolese voices are heard.
- A central theme of the discussion was the need for intergenerational collaboration, where younger digital creators partner with experienced organizers to combat misinformation and maintain consistency in their efforts.
- The discussion served as a call to action for Congolese-Americans to use their organizing power and professional expertise to advocate for positive change in the DRC.



**MUYISA
KASOMO**

Content Creator



**NILS
KINUANI**

Founder of Action for
Congo/DRC Diaspora Desk



**BIBI
NDALA**

NYC Coordinator,
Friends of the Congo

SNEAK PREVIEW

RETURN TO CONGO 2026

The inaugural Return to Congo 2024 trip in Kinshasa was a successful, fulfilling, and impactful experience for the program’s participants. It highlighted the importance for members of the Congolese Diaspora—and others interested in the DRC—who wish to build businesses or philanthropic initiatives in Congo, to first spend time on the ground. Visiting, doing research, and exploring the landscape firsthand are key steps before launching enterprises in the country.

KOLWEZI & LUBUMBASHI

Looking ahead, we are excited to announce that Return to Congo 2026 will expand into a multi-city journey, with stops in Lubumbashi and Kolwezi, the heart of Congo’s mining region. This edition will place a special focus on mining, providing participants with unique insights into one of the country’s most vital and dynamic sectors, while continuing to strengthen the bridge between the diaspora and Congo’s future.





CONGOLESE DIASPORA IMPACT STRATEGIES

Congolese Diaspora Impact Strategies offers expert advisory services to businesses, nonprofits, and foundations looking to enter Congolese and African markets and communities.

SERVICES

- **Strategic communications**
- **Policy Advisory & Analysis**
 - Media landscape analysis
 - Geopolitical risk analysis
- **Business Advisory**
 - Doing Business in Congo, Trade Missions
 - Import/Export of agricultural products
- **Critical Minerals**
 - Strategic Sourcing
 - Regulatory Compliance
 - Ethical Practices
 - Supply Chain Management

ORGANIZATIONS WE WORK WITH



Taptap Send



Startups

CDIS has operated as an incubation hub for Congolese and Diaspora-Founded businesses.

Private Sector

We partner with early-stage startups and businesses to help expand market reach and presence.



Civil Society/Non-profits

We collaborate with nonprofits to raise awareness and funding to address critical issues in the DRC and abroad.

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